A TRACTOR loaded with freshly cut firewood makes its way through the rough terrain of Trore area, Swat, as locals prepare for the winter season. — Photo by Abdul Majeed Goraya

Special branch to be made separate unit to check terrorism

Former official says CTD and Elite Force are already doing the same job

Bureau Report

PESHAWAR: Chief Minister Mohammad Sohail Afridi on Sunday approved establishment of the special branch of police as a separate specialised unit to meet the province's intelligence and counter-terrorism requirements.

According to an official statement, the chief minister said that provision of all necessary human resources, technical equipment, infrastructure and other facilities would be ensured on a priority basis to upgrade the unit on modern lines.

Chairing a meeting, he also granted approval for creation of 1,221 new posts in special branch along with a substantial financial package to strengthen operational capacity of the unit.

The chief minister approved Rs1,820 million for infrastructure development and construction of new buildings for special branch, and Rs904.7 million for procurement of vehicles. Special branch will receive 98 vehicles and 404 motorcycles.

The statement said that Rs2,543.9 million was approved for procurement of advanced technical equipment, technology, surveillance systems and intelligence-related tools for the unit.

"The chief minister also directed that proposed allowances for special branch personnel should be processed on priority," it said. He reiterated that police force was a vital pillar in fight against militancy and all necessary resources must be provided to it without any delay to strengthen professional capabilities of special branch.

The chief minister also approved establishment of new buildings for the unit across the province.

The meeting was informed that special branch personnel were performing key responsibilities including intelligence gathering, security assessment, verification, surveys and surveillance across the province.

The participants of the meeting were informed that 308 personnel from merged districts were integrated into special branch. "In 2025, special branch successfully neutralised two suicide jackets, 32 improvised explosive devices, 70 rocket shells, and 288 hand grenades, preventing several potential terrorist attacks.

Over the past year, the unit also provided security to 635 political gatherings and completed verification of arms and explosive licences, 3,124 National Database and Registration Authority verifications, 6,840 passport verifications, 14,518 China-Pakistan Economic Corridor-related verifications, 6,060 personal verifications and 9,413 official employee verifications.

Security experts however said if a department already existed to counter militancy, there was no need to task another department the same job.

"We already have counter-terrorism department (CTD) of police besides Elite Force of police department doing the same job. CTD collects intelligence and also carries out operations," former head of special branch Syed Akhtar Ali Shah told Dawn.

He said that special branch had a separate role. He said that it collected information in political gatherings, banned literature, verification of documents besides content of speeches made by political and religious leadership.

"Funds and resources should be directed towards one specialised department, which is already there --CTD-- so that the department's capabilities are improved, rather distributing the same amount among three different departments," said Mr Shah.

KP can't afford confrontation with Centre, says governor

By Our Correspondent

DERA ISMAIL KHAN: The Khyber Pakhtunkhwa governor, Faisal Karim Kundi, has expressed deep concern over the deteriorating security situation in the province, warning that the southern districts have been facing severe instability for years and the current wave of terrorism has reached an alarming level.

Talking to Dawn here, the governor accused India and Israel of using Afghan soil to destabilise Pakistan, adding that security forces continue to lay down their lives on a near-daily basis.

The governor said that the situation in Dera Ismail Khan, Tank, North and South Waziristan, Bannu, Lakki Marwat, Kohat, Karak and Kurram had remained tense and that the unrest was not a recent development.

He claimed that hostile intelligence networks were attempting to revive militant activities inside Pakistan. "India and Israel are actively using Afghanistan's territory against us. This is contributing directly to the surge in terrorist incidents," he said.

He added that personnel of the Pakistan Army, Frontier Corps, Frontier Constabulary and police were sacrificing their lives every day, underlining the gravity of the threat.

Commenting on the counterterrorism response, Kundi stressed that intelligence-based operations were the most effective strategy under the current circumstances. "A full-scale military operation is neither advisable nor feasible," he added.

Targeted, intelligence-led action is producing results," he said. He, however, emphasised that despite its courage and competence, the provincial police lacked sufficient resources to deal with well-armed militant groups.

The governor also discussed his recent meeting with a Pakistan Tehreek-i-Insaf (PTI) delegation. He said that he categorically informed the party that Khyber Pakhtunkhwa could not afford confrontation with the federal government.

"Our province cannot bear the cost of political hostilities with Islamabad. Issues must be negotiated through constitutional channels and rational argument," he stated.

He urged that Fata merger-related financial shortfalls and other pending matters should be taken up at the National Finance Commission (NFC) Award meeting as well as in the parliament.

"The province's rights can only be secured through institutional dialogue," he said.

On PTI's protest plans, the governor said peaceful demonstrations were a democratic right, but damaging public property or marching on Islamabad would serve no purpose.

Speaking on development issues, he criticised the previous provincial administration for failing to deliver any major project for Dera Ismail Khan.

Governor Kundi highlighted that the long-delayed Chashma Left Bank Canal project was finally moving forward, with tenders expected soon, which will bring transformation in the southern belt.

Anomalies detected in purchase of equipment for Timergara hospital

By Ashfaq Yusufzai

PESHAWAR: As Timergara Medical College is yet to become operational despite its inauguration in 2015, an interim inquiry committee has found massive-scale irregularities in procurement of equipments for its affiliated district headquarters teaching hospital, Timergara, Lower Dir.

The five-member committee, formed by the principal of Timergara Medical College (TMC) in November 2024, has found that most of the equipments were either non-existent or substandard. The report of the panel said that most of the items were still unpacked and their warranty period was already over. The record is missing, according to the three-page report available with Dawn.

The college has been approved by the provincial government and about Rs2.40 billion has been spent on it so far but classes are yet to begin in it.

The report has asked the medical superintendent of the hospital to instruct the storekeepers to provide record in line with the prescribed procedure and former project director should be instructed to provide the record so that the committee could proceed with smooth probe into the matter.

The committee was formed after a subcommittee of Standing Committee on Health of Khyber Pakhtunkhwa Assembly ordered inquiry into the matter. Both the storekeepers of TMC and DHQ hospital have no record.

The committee found that no master file of equipment was available and there were missing documents, such as supply, purchase orders, standard bidding documents, installation reports and workshop engineer reports.

Equipment worth Rs1.4 billion has been channeled from TMC to DHQ hospital without record. Discrepancies in the purchase of urology equipment of Rs54 million were detected as the items was shown to be registered in the hospital stock register but head of urology department and storekeeper confirmed its unavailability due to which 90 per cent of urological procedures couldn't be performed at the hospital.

The report said 83 out of 139 items were received by an ECG technician instead of the heads of relevant departments. Substandard items were purchased that went out of order within months with no facility of repairing available, it added.

It said that a CT scan machine was already available at the hospital, yet another was purchased for Rs250 million and it had been non-functional since its installation in May 2021. The warranty of the machine had already expired and its repair required Rs12 million, it added.

The report said that a much-needed MRI machine, costing Rs150 million, was not found while the mammography machine, costing Rs50 million, didn't not have a printer connected so unable to provide films to patients.

It said that an incinerator machine, costing 35 million, was purchased but it had been non-functional since 2021. "It is now dumped beside the already functional incinerator donated by MSF," it added.

During the visit, it was noticed that the new machine requires a gas supply to operate, yet there was currently no gas supply to the hospital. The already installed incinerator, which runs on electric power, is fully functional.

Equipment for skin department, costing 12 million, is dumped at skin OPD. "When inquired about its non-functionality, it was revealed that these items were dumped in skin department without any indent and no directions were given about the procedure charges, nor were they installed by the firm," said the report.

It said that four anaesthesia machines were non-functional and according to senior anaesthetist Dr Saeed, they were being handed over to technicians. "He is not aware of machines' specifications and other details, nor have they been installed properly," it added.

The report said that two laparoscopic machines, costing 19 million as mentioned in PC-1, could not be found physically. "The total cost of orthopaedic equipment is RS54 million, but we were only able to verify a few of them," it added.

It said that 300 beds were missing and of the 36 ventilators, 28 were uninstalled. TMC, which was supposed to be completed by 2023, is still far from admitting students as it requires faculty and 500-bed hospital as per PMDC's requirements, which have not been fulfilled.

On August 8, National Accountability Bureau closed inquiry regarding corruption and misuse of authority in the case pertaining to TMC and DHQ hospital.

ANP Kohat leader joins PML-N

KOHAT: Former Awami National Party contestant for the PK-90 constituency in Gumbat area of Kohat district, Yaqub Khan, has formally parted ways with the ANP and joined the Pakistan Muslim League-Nawaz.

Yaqub Khan was officially welcomed into the party by federal minister and PML-N Khyber Pakhtunkhwa president Eng Amir Muqam, who placed the party cap on him during a joining ceremony.

On the occasion, Yaqub Khan expressed full confidence in the political strategy and public service agenda of the central and provincial leadership of PML-N. He pledged to continue his journey of serving the people more effectively on the platform of PML-N.

Addressing the gathering, Mr Muqam stated that the continuous inclusion of influential and prominent political figures from different parts of Khyber Pakhtunkhwa into PML-N reflects the public's trust in the vision of Nawaz Sharif and Shehbaz Sharif and the policies of the party. He added that this trend would further strengthen in the coming days. — APP

Four die in Swabi motorway crash

SWABI: Four persons of a family, including two women, were killed and seven others injured in an accident on the Islamabad-Peshawar Motorway here on Sunday, rescue officials said.

They said a van carrying 11 members of a family collided with a truck on a bridge on the Indus River in Hund area. He said the family was going from Peshawar to Islamabad.

As a result of the collision, four persons, including two women, died on the spot and seven others were critically injured.

The deceased and the injured were taken to Bacha Khan Teaching Hospital, Shahmansoor, by the people before arrival of the rescue teams.

A spokesperson for hospital said majority of the injured had head and shoulder injuries.

The deceased were identified as Arsalan Kha, Aamir Khan, Wajiha and Eman. The injured were Junaid Khan, Muskaan, Nasreen, Hamdan, Barira, Farishta and Zamal. — Correspondent

504 killed in 2025 monsoon floods in KP, court informed

Petitioner seeks development of disaster management plan by govt

Bureau Report

PESHAWAR: National Disaster Management Authority (NDMA) has informed Peshawar High Court that 504 persons including 338 men, 76 women and 90 children lost lives during this year devastating monsoon flooding in Khyber Pakhtunkhwa province.

The authority provided the information in its comments submitted to the high court in a petition filed for developing and implementing a comprehensive disaster management plan and providing adequate compensation and relief to victims of this year natural disasters in the province.

The authority informed the court that prime minister had also approved payment of Rs2 million to next of kin of each of the deceased person.

Apart from NDMA, KP relief, rehabilitation and settlement department and ministry of climate change, who are also respondents in the petition, have also submitted their comments to the court.

A bench consisting of Justice Sahibzada Asadullah and Justice Dr Khurshid Iqbal has put of hearing on request of some of the respondents in the petition filed by Advocate Ahmad Mujtaba, belonging to Swabi district, seeking multiple reliefs related to disasters and natural calamities including floods.

Advocate Mohammad Hamdan appeared for the petitioner and requested the court to issue directives to government to take measures for preventing landslide and flash floods including afforestation, infrastructure development and other mitigating measures.

He sought directives of the court for respondents to establish early warning system and emergency preparedness plans for the areas prone to disasters; set up a monitoring and oversight mechanism to ensure that the disaster management plan was implemented effectively; conduct a thorough assessment of the damage caused by natural disasters in KP and take steps to restore and rebuild affected infrastructure and communities; provide basic necessities like food, shelter and medical aid; and take measures for mitigating the impact of climate change and adapt to its consequences.

NDMA, in its comments, stated that Pakistan's existing disaster management system (DMS) was structured in a three-tier devolved system with the primary onus on provincial and district authorities. However, it added that NDMA's role was to extend support when any disaster was beyond the capacity of provincial/district governments during emergency on the directions of federal government.

It said that losses and damage were recorded in KP during monsoon 2025. As per NDMA's final situation report of Oct 2, 2025, a total of 504 deaths were reported including 256 in Buner district, followed by 43 and 42 in Swabi and Swat, respectively. Similarly, 39 deaths were reported in Shangla, 28 in Mansehra and 25 in Bajaur.

Moreover, 218 persons had also received injuries during floods in different districts in the province.

NDMA also said that a total of 3,222 houses were damaged including 701 fully and 2521 partially damaged. Majority of the 971 houses were damaged in Buner, which was the most severely hit district in the province. A total of 5,467 livestock deaths were also recorded in KP.

The authority claimed that its technical early warning wing continuously monitored meteorological and hydrological conditions across the country using a combination of satellite-based atmospheric datasets and access to on ground measurement networks.

The authority stated that National Disaster management Plan (NDMP) 2025 provided a comprehensive overview of emerging hazards in Pakistan, supported by historical profile.

KP relief department, in its comments, informed the bench that Rescue 1122 rescued around 6,395 persons alive including 2,076 in Swat, 1,391 in Mansehra and 1,214 in Buner. Similarly, Rescue 1122 recovered 442 dead bodies during the monsoon floods this year.

It contended that national disaster such as cloudburst, landslides and heavy rainfall were unforeseen natural phenomena, not attributable to any lapse of respondents. It said that PDMA held a high-level preparedness meeting with chief secretary on June 19, 2025, and key stakeholders to review monsoon contingency plan 2025 so as to ensure top-down directives for timely preparedness actions across the province.

The department, in its 167-page comments, provided details of monsoon contingency plan, SOPs regarding issuance of threat alerts for floods and weather advisories and rescued statistics issued by PDMA.

The department stated that upon receiving critical inputs from Pakistan Meteorological department and NDMA, PDMA undertook a thorough assessment of the potential threat and that evaluation allowed them to categorise the severity of the impending event and formulate appropriate responses.

It also provided details of support to affected people including provision of non-food items, relief funds and logistic support.

The ministry of climate change, in its comments, requested the high court to dismiss the petition as the aggrieved person had the remedy available to file a complaint before environmental protection tribunal to address his grievances under KP Environmental Protection Act, 2014.

It said that the implementation of the said Act, rules and regulations and policy was the fundamental responsibility of KP Environmental Protection Agency within territorial jurisdiction of the province after the Constitution (18th Amendment) Act.